

REMARKS

Applicant has carefully reviewed the Office Action mailed on March 12, 2004. Applicant respectfully traverses all objections, rejections, and assertions made by the Examiner. With this amendment, claims 1, 5, 6, 7, 19 and 30 are amended. Claims 1-3 and 5-38 remain pending.

The abstract of the disclosure is objected to by the Examiner. The Examiner indicated that the abstract contains implied phrases. The specification is amended to remove these phrases from the abstract. Applicant respectfully submits that this amendment overcomes the objection.

It should be noted that the specification is also amended at three other places to correct errors. For example, the paragraph beginning at line 13 on page 4 is amended to correct a typographical error. The first and second paragraphs on page 6 (i.e., the paragraphs beginning at lines 3 and 8, respectively) are also amended to correct typographical errors.

The drawings are objected to as failing to comply with 37 CFR 1.84(p)(5). The Examiner indicated that the following reference numbers mentioned in the specification are not in the drawings: proximal valley 150, distal region 24, distal region 124, fins 126, distal end 38, and distal fins 46. The drawings are amended to address these issues. More particularly, Figure 1 is amended so that it now includes a reference number for distal region 24 and distal end 38. In addition, the lead line for reference number 32 is extended in Figures 1 and 2 so that it more clearly points to lumen 32. Figure 2 is amended so that it includes a reference number for distal region 124 and distal end 38. Additionally, reference number 26 is replaced by reference number 126 in Figure 2 so that fins 126 are more clearly indicated. Figure 4 is amended so that reference number 144 is replaced by 150, reference number 44 is replaced by 144, and reference number 26 is replaced by 126. Collectively, these amendments are believed to overcome the Examiner's objection of the Figures. Further, Figure 5 has been amended to include reference number 58 as discussed in the specification at page 8.

The Examiner also indicated that reference number 152 is shown in Figure 4 yet not mentioned in the specification. Reference number 152 is now replaced by reference number 52 in Figure 4. Applicant respectfully submits that this amendment overcomes this objection.

Claims 1-11, 13-22, 24-30 and 32-38 are rejected under 35 U.S.C. §102(b) as being anticipated by Sagae in U.S. Patent No. 5,176,637. Amended claim 1 now recites that at least a

portion of the support block extends distal of the distal end of the outer tube. Sagae fails to teach at least this limitation of claim 1. Instead, Sagae only discloses that fixing member 5 terminates proximal of the distal end of outer tube 2 (see Sagae at Figures 1, 9 and 10). Because Sagae fails to disclose or teach the claimed limitation, Applicant respectfully submits that Sagae does not anticipate claim 1.

Claim 19 claims a support block coupled to the inner tube distal of the distal end of the outer tube. As stated above, the fixing member of Sagae terminates proximal of the distal end of the outer tube. Therefore, it would be impossible for the invention in Sagae to teach what is claimed in claim 19. In short, Sagae fails to anticipate claim 19.

Claim 30 is amended to assert at least a portion of the support block extends distal of the distal end of the outer tube. For the reasons stated above concerning claim 1, Applicants respectfully assert that claim 30 is patentable over the teachings of Sagae.

Because claims 2-11 and 13-18 depend from claim 1, because claims 20-22 and 24-29 depend from claim 19, and because claims 32-38 depend from claim 30, they are also allowable based on these amendments and because they add significant elements to distinguish them further from the art.

Claims 1-3, 6-8, 11, 14, 16, 17, 18, 30, 32 and 35-37 are rejected under 35 U.S.C. §102(e) as being anticipated Di Caprio et al. in U.S. Patent No. 6,419,685. Claims 1 and 30 are amended to recite that the support block includes a plurality of fins. Di Caprio fails to teach at least this element of the claimed invention. Accordingly, claims 1 and 30 are believed to be allowable over Di Caprio. Because claims 2-3, 6-8, 11, 14 and 16-18 depend from claim 1 and because claims 32 and 35-37 depend from claim 30, they are also allowable based on these amendments and because they add significant elements to distinguish them further from the art.

Claims 12, 23 and 31 are rejected under 35 U.S.C. §103(a) as being unpatentable over Sagae. The Examiner indicated that although Sagae does not disclose the support block coupled to the inner tube by injection molding, it is a well known technique in the art to connect catheter tubes together. Applicant respectfully traverses the rejection. Nonetheless, it is believed that the above amendments to claims 1 and 30, as well as the remarks concerning claim 19, place these claims in condition for allowance. Because claims 12, 23 and 31 depend from allowable claims

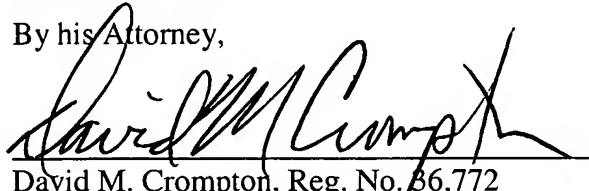
1, 19 and 30, respectively, these claims are also now believed to be allowable for this reason and because they add significant elements to distinguish them further from the art.

Reexamination and reconsideration are respectfully requested. It is respectfully submitted that all pending claims are now in condition for allowance. Issuance of a Notice of Allowance in due course is requested. If a telephone conference might be of assistance, please contact the undersigned attorney at (612) 677-9050.

Respectfully submitted,

Richard L. Goodin

By his Attorney,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "David M. Crompton", written over a horizontal line.

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Attachment: Two Sheets of Replacement Drawings